



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Beal Fuel Maintenance Project Phase Two Extension		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Section 19, Township 10 South, Range 24 East, MDB&M, Auberry 7.5 minute quadrangle.	COUNTY	Fresno
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a continuation of the Beal Fire Road ending at Hwy 168, through a portion of Section 19 that restores the original connecting seasonal road from Hwy 168 to Tollhouse Road completing the Beal Fuel Maintenance is a segment of the 650 Ponderosa Way Fuel Break that was constructed in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The project is located in the Pine Ridge area of Eastern Fresno County and is situated in the Meadow Lakes Priority Area. This fuel break provides protection to the Meadow Lakes and the Bald Mountain subdivisions. The area has been identified and listed on the National List in the Federal Register as a community at risk from wildfire. The objective is to reduce the amount of flammable woody material by thinning and pruning to insure there is space between clumps and to separate crowns. Brush and trees of less than eight inches (8") DBH shall be removed. The fuel reduction activities will predominantly involve the use of a rubber-track slid steer with a Fecon mastication head for mowing grasses, brush, and small trees. Limited use of hand crews with chainsaws performing thinning of young growth trees, pruning limbs of residual trees, clearing of brush concentrations, and elimination of existing and created fuels through cutting, piling, chipping, and burning shall treat areas not accessible to equipment.

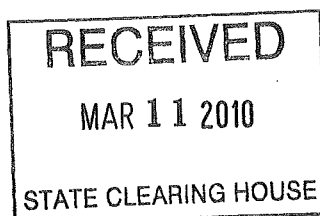
EXEMPTION STATUS


- ☒ X Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project seeks exemption under CEQA Categorical Exemption §15304 Minor Alterations to Land. A search of the California Natural Diversity Database was completed in February, 2007 prior to field review, and updated November, 2009. A biological assessment was completed in November, 2009; including consultation with DFG, with site specific measures incorporated into the project, was prepared by Registered Professional Forester (RPF) Patrick Emmert. This includes avoidance, hand work, and equipment exclusion around sensitive plants such as blue elderberry and retention of low height hardwood snags for wildlife habitat. A Professional Archaeologist reviewed the Confidential Archaeological Addendum on March 3, 2010, and there are no anticipated impacts to cultural resources. Burning will only be done on approved air quality burn days. The project as proposed shall not have a significant impact on the environment.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING




William E. Snyder, Deputy Director
3/10/10
Date